

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 (Currently Amended) A splice module for optically interconnecting ends of first and second optical fibers, each of which has a predetermined radius, the splice module comprising:

a first plate having a surface, in which at least one groove is formed, the groove extending in a predetermined direction; ~~and~~

a second plate having a surface, which is arranged on the surface of the first plate to define a passage way for receiving and aligning the ends of the first and the second optical fibers, wherein the passage way has in a plane perpendicular to the predetermined direction an inscribed circle, ~~which has~~ said inscribed circle having a radius larger than the predetermined radius by a predetermined difference of 1.0 μm or less; and

a main member and a pressing lid, wherein: the main member has a mounting portion for mounting the first plate and projections; the pressing lid is formed with recesses, which engage with and are fitted with the projections while the first and the second plates are caught and fixed between the main member and the pressing lid;

wherein:

the main member comprises a pair of frame portions and a base portion;

each of the frame portions extends in a first direction as the predetermined direction and is arranged apart from the other frame portion in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction, wherein the projections are provided for the frame portions and project between the frame portions;

the base portion connects between the frame portions in the second direction and is provided with the mounting portion;

the pressing lid has a top plate portion and sidewall portions;

the top plate portion has opposite ends in the second direction; and

the sidewall portions project from the opposite ends of the top plate portion towards the base portion in a third direction perpendicular to the first and the second directions, wherein the sidewalls have outside surfaces, respectively, and the recesses are formed in the outside surfaces of the sidewalls;

wherein the outside surfaces of the sidewalls are in contact with the respective frame portions while the projections engage with the recesses; and
wherein:

the top plate portion is formed with an opening and is provided with a beam portion;

the beam portion extends over the opening in the second direction and projects beyond the top plate portion towards the base portion in the third direction;

the base portion is formed with two standing-up portions, which are arranged away from each other in the second direction and project from the base portion towards the top plate portion in the third direction, wherein the standing-up portions are brought into contact with the beam portion while the first and the second plates are placed and fixed between the beam portion and the base portion.

Claim 2. (Original) The splice module according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined difference is a size between 0.5 μm and 1.0 μm , both inclusive.

Claim 3. (Original) The splice module according to claim 1, wherein the groove has a V-shaped cross section.

Claim 4. (Original) The splice module according to claim 1, wherein the passage way has a closed cross section in the plane perpendicular to the predetermined direction.

Claim 5. (Original) The splice module according to claim 1, wherein the first and the second plates have particular hardness equal to or higher than that of silicon.

Claim 6. (Original) The splice module according to claim 5, wherein the first and the second plates are made of silicon.

Claim 7. (Original) The splice module according to claim 1, wherein the groove has a cross-sectional shape obtainable by an etching process.

Claims 8-11. (Cancelled)

Request for Reconsideration:

Applicants are canceling claims 8-11, without prejudice. Applicants are rewriting claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 11 and intervening claims 8-10. Applicants also are amending claim 1 to clarify which element “has the radius.” No new matter is added by these amendments, and these amendments are fully supported by the specification. E.g., Application, Page 2, Lines 20-24. In view of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-7 are pending in this application. There are no Fees due as a result of the submission. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicants and those determined by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, please charge or credit that variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 02-0375. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter these amendments and reconsider this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.